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Myra Builds a House

Women at Work

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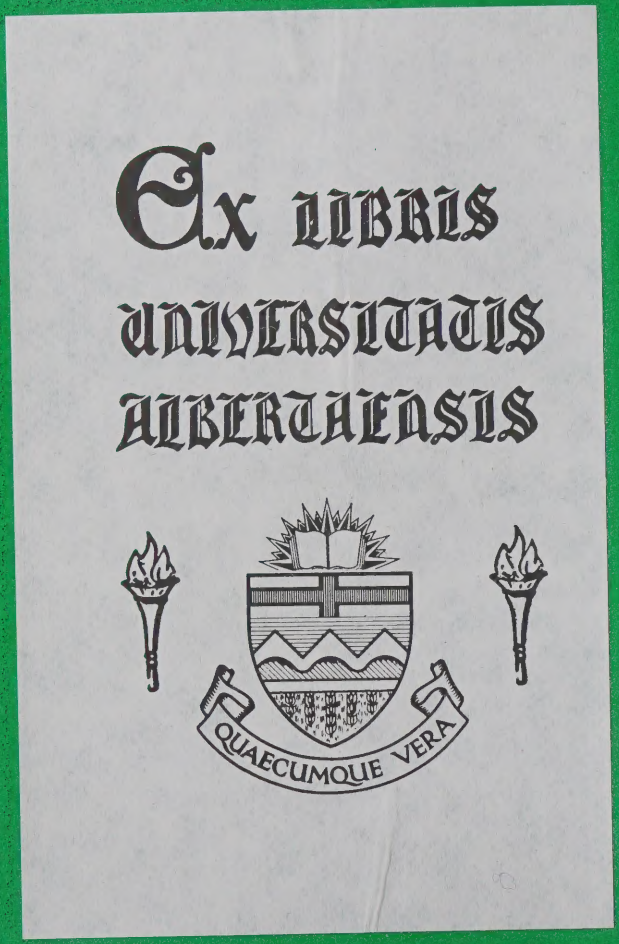
Women at Work

Maryon Makes Shapes
Ellie Sells Fish
Myra Builds a House
Doctor Mary's Animals



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When Gillian and Kim played on the beach they often pretended to be builders. They built with the logs that had been washed up on the sand.

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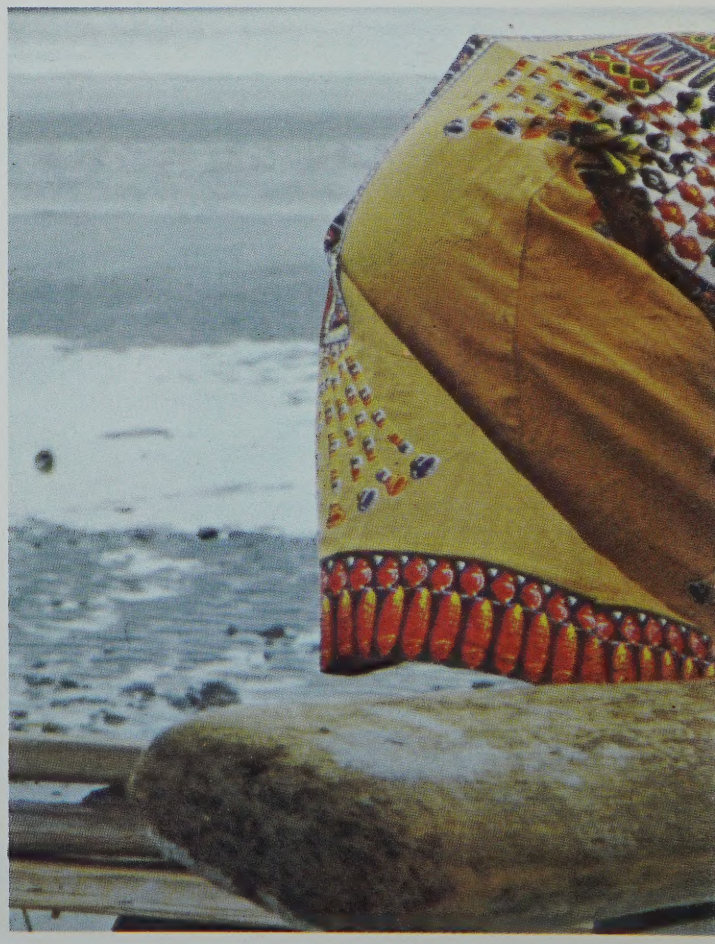
Before they started building, they chose the pieces they wanted to use from the wood piled on the beach. There was plenty to choose from.

"If we build this house high up on the beach," said Gillian, "it won't be washed away when the tide comes in."

"Not like last time," laughed Kim. "The tide came in before we'd finished."



The sisters piled one log on top of another until the walls of the house were as high as their heads. Then they started to build the roof.

"Our house will have a flat roof," said Gillian. "It's not easy to build a pointed one without nails or tools."

When the roof was finished, Gillian and Kim crawled in through the little doorway. Inside their house there was just enough room for two.

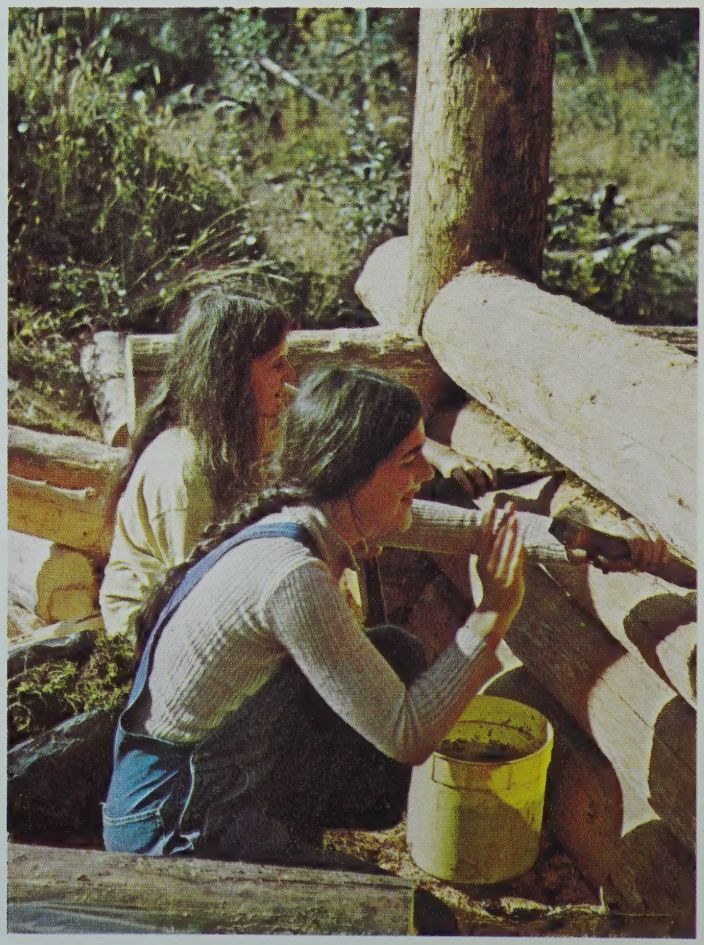
"I can see daylight through all the cracks," said Kim.

"If this was our real house," said Gillian, "we'd have to fill up the cracks to keep out the cold."

"That's what Myra helped Cathy to do," said Kim. "Do you remember?"

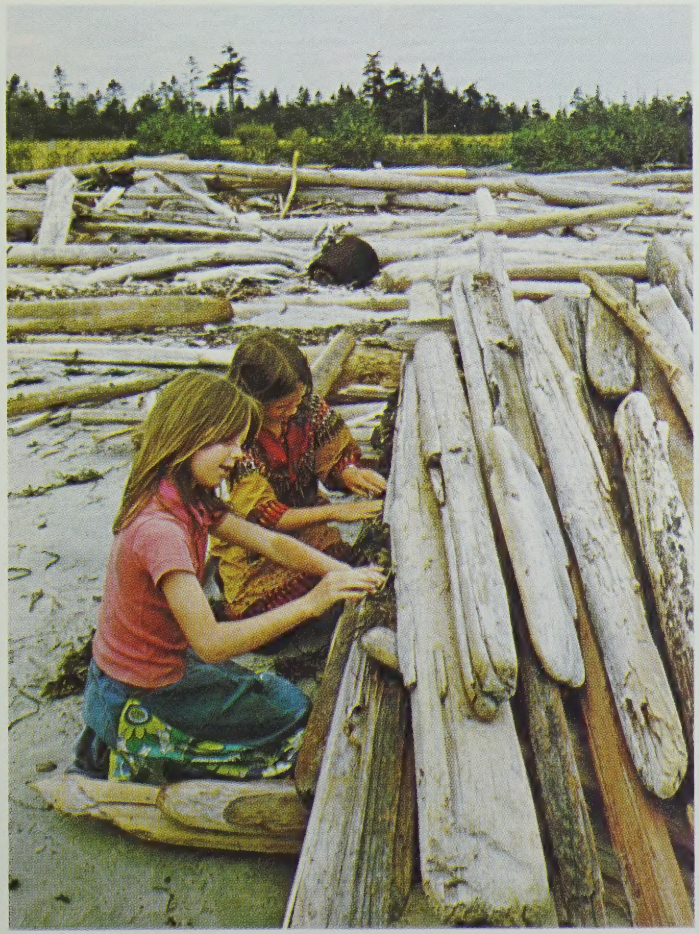
Gillian did remember the day they went with their friend Myra to visit Cathy and Bruce at the log cabin.

Cathy had filled the pail with damp moss. She was using the moss to fill the gaps between the logs in the walls of her cabin. Myra helped Cathy to chink the logs. They took handfuls of the wet moss and pushed it into the cracks. Then they used a wooden tool and a mallet to ram the moss tightly into place. All the cracks had to be filled so that the cabin would be warm and snug in the winter.



"We could chink the walls of our house," said Kim. "Let's use seaweed."

So they did.



Later, Gillian and Kim stopped in to see their friend Myra. She was building a new room on to her own little house.

"Your house is growing another skeleton," said Kim. "It has bare bones of wood."

"It's not as bare as it was last winter," smiled Myra. "I had only the frame done when the snow came. It was cold work nailing the sheets of plywood in place."

"It was warm inside though," said Gillian, "after you put the windows in."

"Especially when the stove was lit," said Kim. "I liked visiting you in the winter."

"This is how my house will look by next winter," said Myra. She showed the sisters the drawings she had made.

"This is the plan of the new room," she said. "Before I started to build I had to measure all the distances and heights and widths."

"So you'd know how much lumber to buy, right?" asked Kim.

"Right," smiled Myra. "So I'd know exactly how many beams and boards and planks I'd be using, and how many nails I would need."

"Could we help you build?" Gillian asked.

"You can help me finish framing this wall," said Myra. "This round window needs to have supports under it. We'll have to measure the distance between the bottom of the window-frame and the floor."

When they knew how long to make the first support, Gillian measured the length on a plank. Myra marked the place with a straight line. Then Gillian sawed along the pencilled line. Myra showed her how to use the rasp to smooth the end of the plank. When Gillian lifted the plank into place, it fitted perfectly.

"Good," said Myra. "It's exactly level. Now we can hammer in the nails."

"I like hammering," said Kim.

"And I like sawing," said Gillian.

"And I like the way you both help me," said Myra. "The work is much easier when it's shared with your friends."

Before they left, Gillian and Kim told Myra that they'd come back another day to build some more.

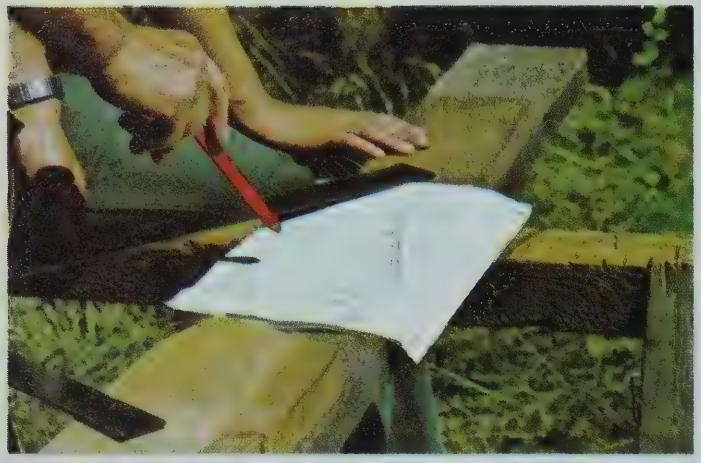
After the two sisters had gone, Myra climbed up the ladder to do some work on the rafters.

"I can't decide on the best way to join these two rafters," she thought. "Tomorrow I'll go and ask Lloyd how he would do it."

Next morning Myra went to see Lloyd.

He was working on the frame of a house he was building. Myra showed him her plans, and explained her problem.

"Well," said Lloyd. "There are several ways you could do it, but I would do it like this."



Myra and Lloyd climbed to the top of the roof. Lloyd showed her how he had joined the rafters. Myra quickly saw how she could solve her problem.

"Thanks, Lloyd," said Myra. "You've saved me a lot of trouble."

Myra helped her friends, too. One day she worked with her neighbour, Margaret, who planned to build a shelf on her kitchen wall. Margaret had made a sketch of the shape she wanted. Then she and Myra drew the shape on a piece of plywood.

Margaret used two different saws for the job. One was for straight sawing. The keyhole saw was useful when the curved part had to be cut.

Myra and Margaret discussed the best way to support the shelf. They decided to chisel a groove to hold one end of the shelf.

Margaret chiselled a groove in a log in the kitchen.

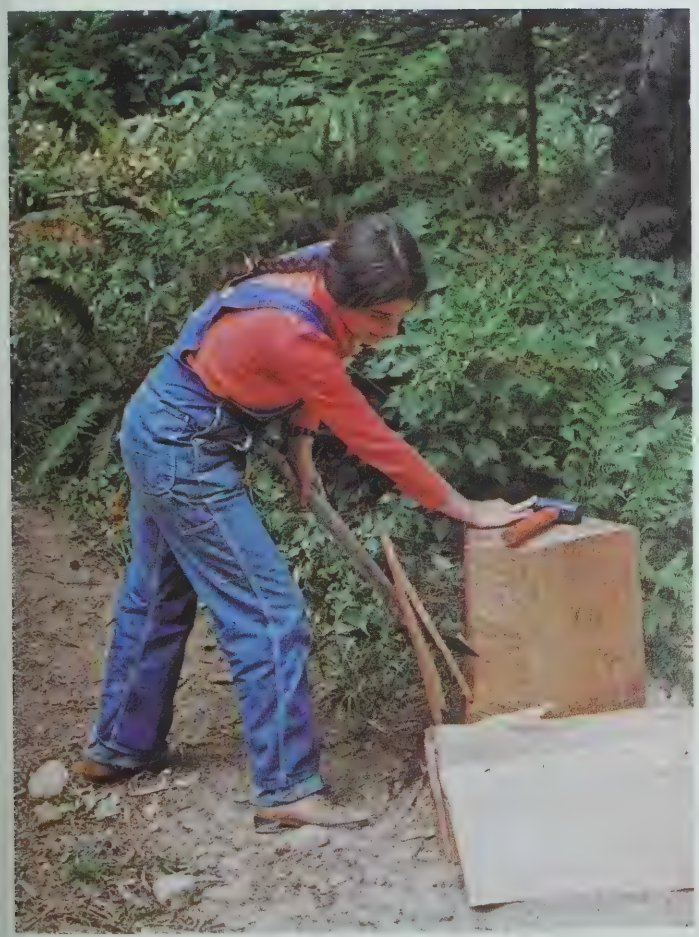
"That's going to work very well," said Margaret, when she had finished chiselling. "Thanks for your help, Myra."

Myra had another job to do that day. Her friends Kirstin and Michael needed shakes for the roof of their woodshed. Shakes are flat wooden tiles and Myra knew how to cut them. She had the special tool she needed. It was called a froe. The froe had a sharp blade to bite into the wood, and a long handle.

Myra stood in front of a block of cedar wood and placed the blade of the froe on it. She gave the froe a few sharp hits with a heavy mallet. The cedar began to split. Myra pulled the handle of the froe towards her. The log split a bit more. She pulled harder and the log split all the way down. Now Myra had a long thin slab of cedar wood, just the right size for a tile.

That's the first one done," said Myra to herself.
But I will need a lot more for the job."

When she had cut a large bundle of shakes
Myra carried them to Kirstin's house.



"Thanks, Myra," said Kirstin. "I think I'll put the shakes on the roof right now."

"I'll help you," said Myra. The friends climbed the ladder to the roof and started laying the shakes.

They lapped one tile over the top of another so that the rain and wind could not get in. Then they nailed the shakes in place.

"Michael and I did some roofing last week," said Kirstin. "We wanted to finish it before it rained."

"I want to put shakes on my house too," said Myra.

"Let us know when you are ready," said Kirstin, "and we will come and help you."

"Thanks, I will," said Myra.

Myra found that helping her friends was a good way to learn about building.

When she visited Wayne he was building a playhouse for his children and their friends.

"I'm really glad you came here today, Myra," Wayne said. "I need help to put the building paper on the walls of the house."

The building paper was in a long strip. Myra and Wayne unrolled it and fitted it against the walls of the house.

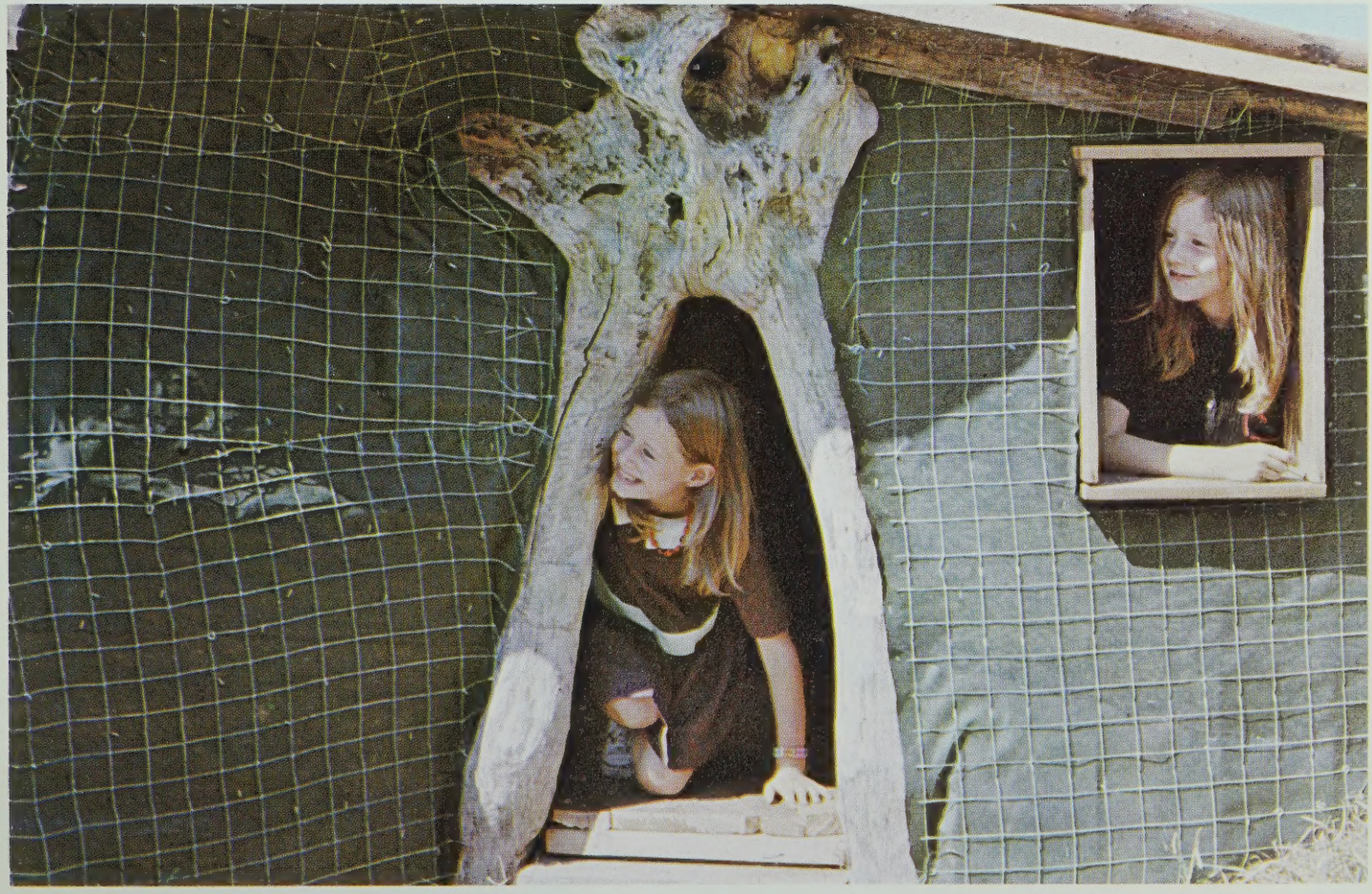
They cut the paper to make room for the windows, then they stapled it in place.

"Building a playhouse is almost as hard as building a full-sized house," said Myra.

"It might even be harder," said Wayne. "There are more little corners and spaces to work around."

"We've both had lots of practice," laughed Myra. "You've built your house and I've built mine."

"And we're builders, too," called the sisters.



"You can play in this little ho
'round," Kim told her friend

"And next spring," said Gillian, "you could even plant a garden like this."

Acknowledgements
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